

Nevada Department of Education
WestEd
University of Virginia
Partnership for Leaders in Education

School Turnaround Program

UVA School Turnaround Cohort 13 Application



Nevada Department of Education (NDE)/WestEd/University of Virginia (UVA) Partnership for Leaders in Education (PLE)

School Turnaround Program (STP) Application Timeline

This application is designed to learn more about your potential interest in a partnership, providing foundation for discussing next steps together and tailoring service to your team if there is a fit. In order to minimize time it takes to complete, we ask only for 2-3 sentence responses for each open-response question.

Date	Action
July 15, 2015	SVA STP Cohort 13 Application and materials released by NDE
July 20-24, 2015 (<i>Day/Time TBD</i>)	Initial overview meeting/conference call with potential applicants: This is your opportunity to learn more about the UVA Partnership for Leaders in Education. Based on the information in this meeting, your district may or may not pursue this opportunity this year.
July - August 2015	Telephone assistance in supporting districts with application: Tammy Bolen 775.687.9114
August 5, 2015	NDE/WestEd/ UVA STP Cohort 13 Applications Due to: tbolen@doe.nv.gov
August – September, 2015	Initial interviews with recommended districts (NDE/WestEd); district readiness assessment for accepted districts
September 2015 (<i>Dependent on UVA PLE and readiness assessments, etc.</i>)	Announcement of NDE/WestEd/UVA STP Cohort 13

Part One: Applicant Information

1. LEA/Charter Holder Information

Provide the following information for the LEA/Charter Holder.

LEA/Charter Holder Name:	State:	
Superintendent:	Email:	Phone #:
Mailing Address:	City/State/Zip:	
Telephone#:	Fax#:	

2. District Level Participants

Superintendent must be one of the district team members who will have primary responsibility for insuring implementation and sustainability of the initiative. It is recommended that other district members would include: Curriculum and Instruction Director, Principal Supervisor, SPED Director, ELL Director.

Name	Role	Email	Phone Number

3. School Participation.

Total number of schools in the district?

Number of schools potentially participating in the program?

Recommended School(s)'s Name	2012 designation	2013 designation	2014 designation

In determining schools to potentially participate, UVA encourages the system to consider:

- Schools with Priority, Focus, or One Star designation that have demonstrated potential for dramatic growth.
- Schools that, with the right investments, can serve as learning labs for the district to pilot and implement practices that could eventually have system-wide impact.
- A critical mass of partner schools to ensure initiative contributes to systems' change.
- Schools that strategically fit together, such as like schools (schools that serve the same grade level) and feeder schools (elementary schools that feed into middle schools, etc.)

How will you identify schools for participation?

Part Two: UVA's Ready to Move Survey

1. **Interest.** The UVA STP consists of nearly three years of integrated activity that empowers system leaders and principals to practice leadership behaviors that drive significant gains in student achievement. Leveraging deeply immersive experience at UVA and within districts, we provide opportunities for system and school leaders to identify key district and school issues, solve problems collaboratively, and develop strategies based on their own context. We support courageous leaders in doing whatever is necessary to reignite and transform their systems towards excellence.

Based on your current knowledge of the UVA STP program, why is it potentially of interest?

2. **Systemic Approach.** As we believe system ownership and change is critical to sustainable success of school turnaround, district leadership is central to our partnerships. What are the barriers, if any, that may prevent you from providing this type of intensive support? Check all that apply.

☐ Capacity

☐ District Restructuring

☐ Funding

☐ Political Climate

☐ UVA STSP Requirements

☐ Other

Please elaborate below:

3. **Desire for Change.** No matter how much good growth has been made, there is still the recognition of the need for change and willingness to create and implement a bold plan of action. Please describe briefly why you believe your district is prepared for such bold action?

4. **Competency-Based Selection.** Effective leadership is an essential component of any successful school turnaround effort. The UVA STP believes there are certain competencies, or patterns of thinking, feeling, acting or speaking, which enable certain individuals to be effective leaders.

Thus, the UVA STP leverages a competency-based approach to:

- Work with districts to develop their ability to identify promising leaders
- Leverage a competency-based interview and selection model to understand strengths & needs of leading candidates (working alongside district leaders)
- Require prospective candidates (existing principals or applicants) to score above a threshold score in order to lead a school participating in our program

If given training and support, are you willing to utilize a competency-based selection process to help identify principals to lead turnaround schools and potentially make leadership changes in the schools.

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ Unsure – Need More Information

If you selected unsure, please elaborate on what you would like to learn in the space below.

5. **Readiness Assessment.** The UVA STP uses a District Readiness Assessment to determine the readiness of a system to engage in school turnaround efforts and allow our team to learn more about your context in order to be a better partner. At the end of the process, we would identify recommendations for how the district can address gaps in readiness. Are you willing to participate in the district readiness assessment, and make district leaders available for these interviews?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ Unsure – Need More Information

6. **Past Turnaround Efforts.** Have you participated in any other turnaround initiatives?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what limited the success of the turnaround effort or what did you learn (briefly) to apply to these efforts?

7. **Support to Underperforming Schools.** Does your district currently have a system in place to prioritize and provide additional support to underperforming schools?

☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what are the most significant ways your district prioritizes and supports to underperforming schools? Check all that apply.

☐ Increased Funding ☐ Priority in Placement of Top Recruits ☐ Tailored PD ☐ Program Content
☐ Additional District Coaching/Visits ☐ Other

Please elaborate in the space below.

8. **Third-Party Support.** To support the schools that would likely be involved in the turnaround initiative, does your district currently partner with any third-party organizations for critical purposes (such as data usage, talent recruitment, professional development or mentoring)? If so, please briefly describe their role. The UVA STP would seek to align support with other partners.

9. **Additional Information.** What additional information would assist you in determining whether the UVA PLE is appropriate for your district?

- ☐ Cost ☐ Time Commitment ☐ Program Requirements ☐ Program Results
☐ Profile of past participants ☐ Timeline for participation ☐ Other

If other, please elaborate in the space below.

Part Three: LEA Commitment

If a school district is selected to participate in the UVA STP Cohort 13 and district leadership determines to move forward following a readiness assessment, the superintendent will be asked to sign an “LEA Assurance of Commitment.”

This agreement indicates that the district understands its central role in driving turnaround work and adapting practices to create conditions where turnaround schools thrive.

The PLE believes strongly in the need to develop not only individual school principals, but also district leadership capacity so that an infrastructure exists to provide the strong support needed for urgent and sustainable success. Superintendents of selected districts must commit to:

1. Participate fully in all scheduled meetings and trainings including, but not limited to:
 - On-site District Readiness Assessment (Fall, 2015)
 - District Boot Camp (Spring, 2016)
 - Year 1 week-long Summer Institute on UVA Campus (Summer, 2016)
 - Multiple on-site Visits from UVA per year (2016-17 and 2017-18 School Year)
 - Winter Retreats (January – February, 2017 and 2018)
 - Summer Institute (4 days) on UVA Campus (Summer, 2017)
2. Designate a high-level central office staff member (preferably a cabinet member) to serve as the “district shepherd.” The district shepherd’s responsibility is to lead implementation of the turnaround initiative, including the provision of targeted support and accountability and the implementation of comprehensive systems associated with the initiative.

The shepherd must ensure turnaround schools are prioritized and establish an office or team that provides meaningful weekly visits to support and monitor the initiative. The district shepherd (and his/her team) will build and maintain trusting relationships with school leaders and will work with them to identify and address priority issues. It is critical for the district shepherd to have a direct line of communication to the district Superintendent and serve as the primary point of contact and accountability for the turnaround principals, thereby solidifying the prioritization of these schools and ensuring the responsiveness of all district departments to campus turnaround efforts.

3. Implement a few context-based recommendations co-determined by the PLE and the district following the readiness assessment, including likely efforts to participate in deeper utilization of data analysis and data-driven action planning for each school involved in the program.
4. Share all formative and summative data relating to the *Turnaround Initiative* with staff of the *Initiative*.
5. Re-pay all related training and travel costs in the event of failure to demonstrate a good faith effort to meet all of the above conditions and/or in the event of withdrawal from the program prior to completion of year 2 of the program.
6. Given our desire to work collaboratively with district leaders, we require the following commitments:
 - Demonstration of commitment and capacity to making initiative a top priority, including prioritization in meeting needs and provision to partner schools.
 - Superintendent public communication of the urgency and need for such an initiative and availability for at least strategic support throughout initiative.
 - Appointment or recruitment of district shepherd with time to drive turnaround effort, evaluative authority over turnaround principals and a direct line of communication to the superintendent (unless shepherd is superintendent).
 - Senior district team (beyond shepherd) participation in executive education and coordinated support throughout the program.

We are not asking your system to make these commitments while you assess our compatibility as partners. Nevertheless, based on your current knowledge of our program, are you likely willing to make these commitments?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ Unsure – Need More Information

Superintendent's Signature

Date

